



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PDX-11-014

**TITLE: Support of Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk's August 31, 2011 Decision to Allow Tribes the Ability to Govern Themselves and Determine Their Own Tribal Citizenship**

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### NCAI HEADQUARTERS

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**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the bedrock federal Indian law principle of tribal sovereignty is that each Indian Nation, as a distinct political entity, may "manag[e] its own affairs and govern itself," *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. 1, 16 (1832); and

**WHEREAS**, in *Santa Clara Pueblo v. Martinez*, 436 U.S. 49 (1978), the United States Supreme Court ruled that governance of the citizenship laws of an Indian tribe is an internal matter, and that Indian tribes have an absolute right to determine their own citizenship; and

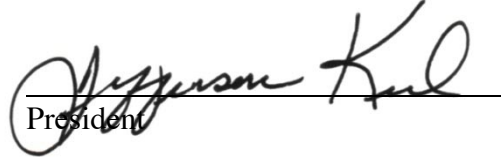
**WHEREAS**, tribal control over tribal citizenship is necessary to protect tribal culture, tradition and society.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, consistent with the holdings of Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk's August 31, 2011 decision, NCAI strongly supports the right of all Indian Nations to determine their own citizenship, and opposes any effort by state or federal governments or courts to interfere with tribal internal decision making; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2011 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon on October 30 – November 4, 2011, with a quorum present.

  
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President**ATTEST:**  
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Recording Secretary